

CHALLENGES OF IRANIAN WOMAN FOR ONLINE SOCIAL INTERACTIONS (PERSPECTIVES OF FEMALE ACTIVISTS ON THE INTERNET)

Azam Iranshahi¹, Seyedahmad Beheshti^{*2}

¹ Khomein Branch, Islamic Azad University, Khomein, Iran. Iran_shahi_az@gmx.com

^{2*} Khomein Branch, Islamic Azad University, Khomein, Iran

Abstract: Separations and limitations of women on the basis of social attitudes, in the area of information and knowledge, have come to challenge with interactive attitudes. The relations of pc and human beings are increasingly growing. The computers are connecting to each other through local and global networks and wireless technologies. Computer technology provides a vast new opportunity for interaction of human being and machine. The most important point is interaction of human to the human on internet and on line. Iranian women are also active on this Virtual Space and statistics show that they are using all communicational opportunities. These connections on virtual space, will bring out growths and developments of women. There are, of course, some challenges in the virtual space for women. This essay will study challenges and pathologies of social interactions of women in the virtual space. Study method is on the basis of descriptive and methodology is surveying. 102 activist women in the virtual space were chosen and their opinion collected through questioners. Research findings show that there are opportunities and threats on this space for women and in this field enough information and education are necessary. [Azam Iranshahi, Seyedahmad Beheshti. **CHALLENGES OF IRANIAN WOMAN FOR ONLINE SOCIAL INTERACTIONS (PERSPECTIVES OF FEMALE ACTIVISTS ON THE INTERNET)**. *Life Sci J* 2012;9(3):1165-1170]. (ISSN: 1097-8135). <http://www.lifesciencesite.com>. 162

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1. Introduction

There are numeral arguments and researches on communication through computer and internet and it is same as emergences of universal mass media in the past decades. There are many researches that show individual and social effects, short and long effects, positive and negative effects and at last superficial or deep effects. While considering historical, social and cultural records of the different societies, it reveals that women have not effective roles. Thus some people confirm crucially that women have not assigned any fundamental rules during agricultural and individual eras. The most important factor, maybe, patrimonial perspectives during this eras-mass culture, of course is another reason because of its patrimonial approach. 21st century, which have brought about knowledge and information era, has created a ground for sexual approaches and has challenged any action for limiting interactive space for presence of women. Thus, skill and knowledge are the basis for playing any role, and we may call it competence. "Communication on the basis of computer "has created a revolution in the process of communication and it will create a new culture. This kind of communication historically is new media and will relatively empower women and other minority groups. It might be an opportunity for reversing traditional roles of power and authority (Weber Max .1991).As a result, we may say that this new communication tool has created a new

opportunity for new presence. This is an opportunity for people to know themselves as they are willing so.

1.1. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Expansion of internet has created in itself a new environment which needs theoretical framework in the field of psychology, recognition and communication (Goslin, M, and Morie, J. F., (1996)).The women also have experienced new social presences through internet opportunities. Iranian women who are considerable parts of users-are willing to be present in the virtual space. There are more than 30000 women blogs and bloggers on the internet.Women are also present in social networks. These networks are increasingly progressive, wide spread and common place; therefore it is necessary to investigate its social consequences. The process for women is more complex and considerable. There are new forms of women participations and interactions on the internet unlike the traditional outlooks toward women. Communication is forming on line and is increasingly growing. Therefore, there are needs to study the social and sociological aspects of the phenomena. Technologies of communication and information have facilitated all kinds of connections and removed geographical barriers of availability on one hand and created some anomies and problems, on the other hand. It seems that using internet has caused isolationism of women, and this will threat their day to day interactions. There are some obstacles on the way of availability to the internet by women such as

digital gap, on-availability of computer, lower level of literacy for women, and lacking other related tools and facilities. These limitations will lead to unsuitable presence of women into virtual space. Some behaviors are not suitable for women and will make them humbles. There are some anomalies because of non-availability of enough information. Internet crimes have targeted women and are going to abuse them. It is necessary for women to be aware of these risks and anomalies, to avoid anomalies. To use internet, education and making culture is necessary. There are many insecurities, crimes in the virtual space. The women should be aware of these risks and dangers and crimes. The women will be able to adapt themselves to the positive aspects of this space, through enough education, knowledge and information, and they will also be able to minimize these risks and anomalies. This essay is trying to answer following questions:

- 1) Is there enough social security for women on virtual space?
- 2) Is there any threat for women privacy through net?
- 3) Are there any sexual attitudes toward women on net?
- 4) Will women family relations be in dangers through virtual relations?

2.1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

1.2.1. Digital sexual gap:

Using internet is the most important digital sexual gap, since women have the less usage of internet in spite of their positive approaches toward internet. For example only 38% of users in Latin America are women. Whereas this percent in European Union is 25%, Russia 19%, Japan 18% and it is only 4 % in Middle East. The most users on the global level are men, university graduated or other persons who are wealthy. There is a good development in this respect, in Scandinavia and American countries and the sexual gap has been totally decreased (VALKENBURG, et.al. 2006). As primary conference of ministries for global sessions of global informative society (Whang, S.-M. – Chang, G. (2004)) has emphasized on the lists of special limitations on availability of internet for women, on the basis of digital sexual gap:

- 1) High costs and expenses for availability of internet
- 2) Limited availability to the new education and skills (lacking information and lack of necessary motivations for universality of communication and information)
- 3) Shortages of networks

Meanwhile, there is a man image to the internet. Someone has pointed out other factors such as geographical families and ages of the users, as

obstacles. A research show that women are mostly consumers of virtual space and there are in comparison with men, a less production of content (Rheingold, H. (2000)).

3.1. BIGLOBALISM PARADIGMS

This paradigm study related, integrated and parallel worlds and pay attention to the multi globalism into these two worlds. The first world has a geographical traits and its political system is based on nation-state, natural, industrial, concrete and a sense of historical oldness. This world is distinguished from the second one. The second world's traits are as follow: super industrialization, super place and time, non limited civic law based on nation-states, altered and post modern epistemology, synchronized availability, availabilities of new cultural, economic, political spaces which are relatively separated from the first one, but these two are twins and many individual and group interactions are based on the interactions of these two worlds.

We may expect these two aspects of globalizations for women who are active in the virtual space and major parts of their daily communication are on line.

In addition there are some defects for virtual communication as follow:

- 1) Self-conscious individualism
- 2) Provisional connections
- 3) Abnormalities of internet
- 4) Decrease of real social relations
- 5) Disorder

These defects may result in problems for personality and feelings of women.

4.1. SELF CONSCIOUS INDIVIDUALISM:

We may say evidently that privacy and individuality has expanded and has gotten a most important situation against public sphere. Individuals on internet are able to hide their identities, so they present on a collective scene but will feel that are separated and isolated from others. This trait resulted in strengthening capacity and power of individual and they may act on their most hidden aspects of their personalities. There are no hierarchical of power on internet, so individuality will not be dissolved in the place of connection and as Rheingold, H. says, a person will learn a respectful way of life and independence action on internet. The basis of individual and identity is so changeable that there will not be any collectiveness on the internet. There will be movements on the basis of strengthened individuality in the society. As Shank, P. (2003), is believed that reversed trends all are expressing that individual has empowered and individual norms are

dominating on collective social norms. This cultural plurality has a meaningful relation with expanding of human communication and the most part of it is caused by sharing in virtual space (Shank, P. (2003)).

5.1. PROVISIONAL CONNECTIONS

Everything is provisional on virtual space. There is no guarantee for continued action and activity on line, therefore, there will not be any sense of liability. Decisions are taken on the basis of feelings and excitements of the moments (Kanuka, H., & Anderson, T. (1998)).

1.5.1. Breaking Norms on Internet:

Ambiguity of the identity, lack of face to face communication and lacking of any power hierarchical, internet is a suitable place for breaking norms, values and for moral and belief misuses. Deviations such as second gap, entering into pornographic sites, creating blogfa and including in it on immoral menu are examples (Gunawardena, C., N., & Zittle, F. J. (1997)).

2.5.1. Decreasing Real Social Relations:

Virtual space is so much interesting and attractive; so many people who enter into it will forget their time passing on internet. Grant has investigated and showed that more use of internet results in less social communication.

It is impossible to reproduce a sincere and affective social relation on internet (Wendt, Alexander.1999).

6.1. Disorder and Anarchy

Any authorization has a risk of being despotic. Omitting power and authority will also create conflict and challenge. It will result in anarchism on internet. Anarchistic structures or at least unstructured networks will not allow any hierarchy. Identity is a common trait which connects public and hierarchy and individual will understand itself and other identities through this connection. Therefore, plural and unreal identities will not allow any power hierarchies. There is a huge volume of online information and it has no management, then on line information encountered with anarchical situation. On line privacy and security are limited and hackers are able to enter into privacy of other life (Grieco, Joseph.1988).

2. Material and Methods

Methodology of this research is descriptive and explanative on the basis of survey method. Descriptive method will describe studying phenomena. It will merely contribute to know existing conditions, or decision making. The most part of behavior science and researches are done on the basis of descriptive method.

1.2. STATISTICAL POPULATION

Populations are prominent women on blogfa and virtual spaces. Persian blog held a seminar for the most prominent women on blogfa and virtual space on Oct 2008. The title of seminar was: "more prominent blogfa writer's women in Persian blogfa area." Data collecting tools of the research is electronic questioner and to evaluate its credit validity views of some scholars have been used. A site in the name of <http://cybawomen.ir> has been designed for placing questioners on it.

2.2. VALIDITY OF MEASURING TOOLS

Validity as a concept is to answer this questions that how the tools or methods of data collecting will measure them. Correctly the questioner were considered by some scholars, edited and then distributed. This method is called content or rational validity and is used for measuring constituents of measuring tools. 102 questioners were completed, but statistical population was 110.

3.2. SAMPLING METHOD

The target sampling was chosen for this research. Target sampling is a non probable sampling method and researcher will choose a special sample on the basis of targets of research. The sample includes subjects who are compatible with special traits and attributes. Any subjects who are not compatible with these criteria are omitted. Sampling method is suitable for this research because of presence of women activists on internet. Through this method we could study about women who are much active on internet. Alfa Kronbakh method was used for assurance of durability and permanency. This method is used to measure one sided beliefs and attitudes. In fact, we want to know the sameness of answers. The Alfa Kronbakh index was 75% after evaluation and removing any ambiguity and this index achieved through SPSS. This percent is acceptable one in the scientific resources. To analyze all statistical operation needed for such as one variable and two variables χ^2 , SPSS software was used. This software will facilitate analyzing and will bring assurance toward exactness of calculations. Answers of the questioners were analyzed and encoded and entered into SPSS software for analyzing needed statistical operations.

3. Results

The following tables are resulted from questioners of population.

Table1: Communication with virtual friends are constituting most parts of women presences on internet

Communication with virtual friends are constituting most parts of women presences on internet	Observed frequencies	Expecting frequencies	differences
Agree fully	18	20.4	-2.4
Agree	53	20.4	32.6
No opinion	15	20.4	-5.4
Not agree	10	20.4	-10.4
Not agree fully	6	20.4	-14.4
Total		102	

Table No.1 one variable khi2 table in terms of the degrees of interactions with virtual friends.

$X^2=69.275$ $df=4$ $sig=0.000$

In view of khi2 test of one variable and $df=4$ khi 2 was 69275. We may say by 99% that there are meaningful differences between observed and expected frequencies. Therefore, 53 persons (55%) are agree with this chosen item.

Table2: it has shown one variable khi2 in terms of preferring virtual communications on relations with real friends.

There are not enough security for women on line	Observed frequencies	Expecting frequencies	differences
Agree fully	7	20.4	-13.4
Agree	38	20.4	11.6
No opinion	18	20.4	-2.4
Not agree	32	20.4	17.6
Not agree fully	7	20.4	-13.4
Total		102	

One variable khi2, $DF=4$ is 33.196 - $sig=0.000$

There is a full meaningful difference between observed and expected frequencies, therefore 38 persons who are majorities in statistical populations are agreeing with chosen case.

Table3: it has shown one variable khi2 in terms of security of women in virtual space

There are not enough security for women on line	Observed frequencies	Expecting frequencies	differences
Agree fully	7	20.4	-13.4
Agree	38	20.4	11.6
No opinion	18	20.4	-2.4
Not agree	32	20.4	17.6
Not agree fully	7	20.4	-13.4
Total		102	

The most persons are agree with the chosen case (38 persons=36.3%). $X^2=33.667$ $df=4$ $sig=0.000$

Table4: it has shown one variable khi2 in terms of security of "sexual attitudes toward women in the virtual space

There are no sexual attitudes toward women	Observed frequencies	Expecting frequencies	differences
Agree fully	5	20.4	-15.4
Agree	6	20.4	-14.4
No opinion	7	20.4	-13.4
Not agree	59	20.4	38.6
Not agree fully	25	20.4	4.6
Total		102	

There are meaningful differences between observed and expected frequencies (57.8%).

Table 5: it has shown one variable khi2 in terms of "weakening family relations in effects of women virtual interactions

Social interaction of virtual space will weaken women family relations	Observed frequencies	Expecting frequencies	differences
Agree fully	6	20.4	-14.4
Agree	58	20.4	37.6
No opinion	17	20.4	-3.4
Not agree	16	20.4	-4.4
Not agree fully	4	20.4	-15.4
Total		102	

57.8% agree with chosen case and there are meaningful differences between observed and expected frequencies.

Result of the research reveals that the majority of respondents are agree with this phrase (there are no enough social security for women on internet). And there are also meaningful relations between situations of married or single women and their opinions on security or insecurity. This result is harmonious with results of a research under title of "social problems of women in internet: 2005".

Respondents agree that there is sexual attitude on internet and the real identity will create more problems for women. They do not agree that "there is no sexual attitude on internet." Experiences of women in science and technology historically have been limited and dominated by the men many researches show that internet is men oriented such as other technological grounds. Internet is reproducing Special structure of races, classes and sexual stereotypes. The women need securities both in real life and virtual space, but unfortunately this security is neglected into virtual space. For examples there are oral and written coarseness through chat and internet, using annoying and obscene words against women or even spoiling and attack to women sites. Pornographic scenes and images on line teach men that women are vulnerable people and are entitled to be misused through quarreling sexual torment and aggression .Pornographic activities reveal continuous system of paternalism and men domination. The men show their dominations through sexual misuses of women. This pictures show women as obedient persons. Coarseness and sex are main themes of Pornographic Industry .The most parts of these pictures and movies show that men are dominating on women and the women are showed in the degraded position. There is possibility to violate privacy of people because there are no identified identities and availability of personal information. The most respondents are believed in threats for women privacy and they should learn more about security on internet and pay attention to their interactions to avoid any harm. Emergence of networks ,have created more risks and threats than other technologies .The most evident threats are violating privacy, misusing personal data, and physical threats through on line interactions. Albeit, for following all actions of public networks users are more threatening for people. There are two crimes against women on line .One is sexual exploitations and the second one is torment and aggression toward women. Using women for online pornography and women stowaway are under the first category and internet has facilities these unlawful activities.

One of the conclusions of this research is that many respondents have announced that most parts of their presence are related to their interactions with friends on line and many of them prefer this

kind of relations to real communication. Virtual communication in the excessive form will bring about isolation and depression; it will weaken family institution and will create many problems for all people in any old ages. The most respondents have been agreed to this chosen case:"social interaction on virtual space will weaken the family connections". One of the Respondents says that:"the virtual space is an insecure, convulsive and uneasiness, therefore it is necessary for women to learn more about virtual space and its risks and dangers. Respondents often look at blogfa to be more suitable and secure. Activist women on line believe that there is no online desirable availability for women and all layers of women have no opportunities to present on line because of lacking public education about this space, and also lack of software and hardware possibilities. Respondents say that availability to the internet is not desirable, because of high expenses and low quickness .These factors will affect on women too. And the conclusion is compatible with sexual digital gap theory:

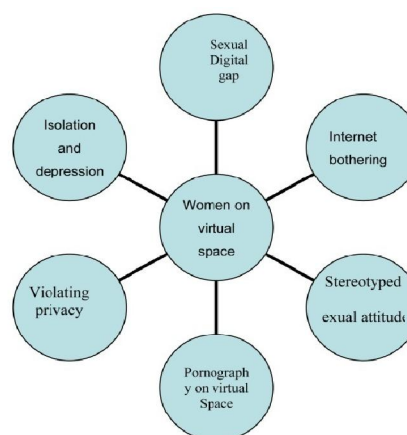


Fig 1. Challenges of women on virtual space

4. Discussions

Modern communication technologies have created new opportunities for different group of people and it is also so valuable for women .Women in the third world or developing countries are encountered with many obstacles for interactions, because of common traditions and circumstances.

There are many opportunities and threats for women on internet. Following people proposals are put on to develop social interactions of women and meanwhile to decrease the threats and pathologies:

- 1) Providing public education in the aim of more on line availability of all layers of women.
- 2) Providing for women desirable availability to internet.

- 3) Instituting social clubs and networks, in so that members of family (parents and children) may participate and enter – collectively and commonly.
- 4) Producing useful Persian (Persian) contents online about women problems;
- 5) Giving necessary education about the way of caring on line privacy.
- 6) Giving educations to women for on line participations and avoiding side pathologies and so on.
- 7) Expanding scientific investigations and researches on psychological aspect of internet.
- 8) Developing necessary and suitable laws and regulation for keeping women security on internet.

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Corresponding Author:

Seyedahmad Beheshti
Khomein Branch, Islamic Azad University, Khomein, Iran
E-mail: Beheshti.S.A@gmx.com

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